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THE ÅLAND QUESTION

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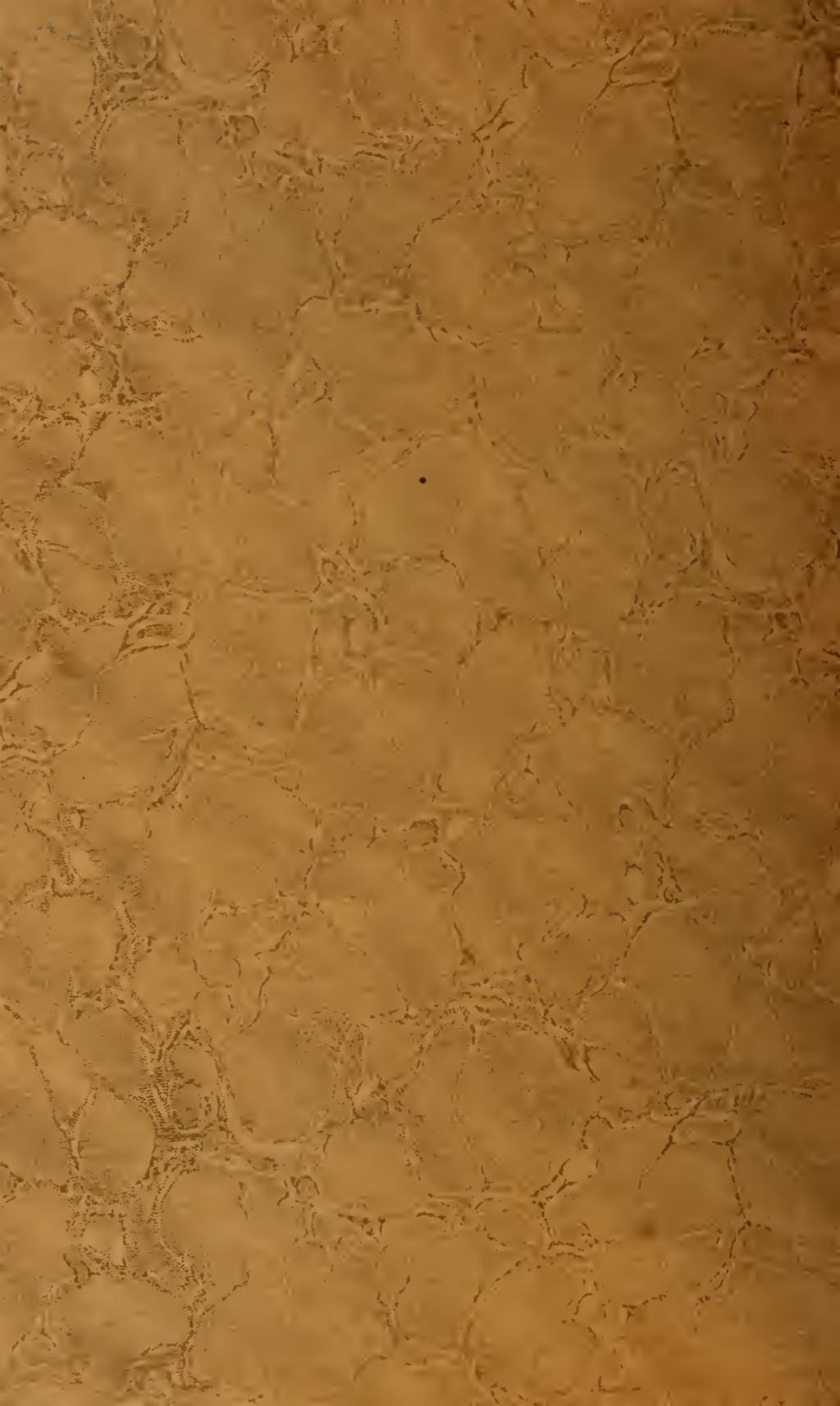


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THE ÅLAND QUESTION

RÉSUMÉ OF ARGUMENTS AND POINTS OF VIEW
IN DEFENCE OF FINLAND's RIGHT TO THE ÅLAND
ARCHIPELAGO

BY

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HELSINGFORS, 1919
STATSRÄDETS TRYCKERI

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The letters å, ä, ö used in this pamphlet in words of Finnish and Swedish origin are pronounced: å — call, ä — bad, ö — bird.

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THE ÅLAND QUESTION.

1) The Situation and Boundaries of Åland.

The group of islands, called Åland, lies between $59^{\circ} 47'$ and $60^{\circ} 32'$ latitude and $36^{\circ} 52'$ and $38^{\circ} 47'$ longitude. It has a length of about 70 kilom. from Saggö and Karlskär in the North to Lågskär lighthouse in the south; its greatest width is 110 kilom. from Signildskär in the west to Jurmo (Brändö) in the east. The whole area of Åland amounts to 1,426 square metres. Of its fifteen parishes seven are situated on the largest of the islands, the so-called mainland of Åland; the others are called island parishes and of these Brändö, Kumlinge, Sottunga, Föglö and Kökar are the most easterly, situated near the frontier of Finland Proper.

The administrative boundaries of the group of islands, which forms a separate district of administration or county, are indicated in the north by the natural contour of the archipelago against the Bothnian Bay, in the west and south they are indicated by the territorial boundary against the Åland Sea, resp. the Baltic. The boundary against the mainland has, ever since the districts of administration were regulated in the seventeenth century, followed the so-called „Skiftet”, straits which separate the islands belonging to the mainland in the east and Brändö, Kumlinge, Sottunga and Kökar island parishes in the west. In the middle of 1850 Utö, Jurmo, and Österskär villages, lying out in the open sea near the Baltic, were separated from Åland and joined in their administration and jurisdiction with the mainland.

2) Historical Points of View in the Åland Question.

Ever since the early Middle Ages Åland belonged administratively to Finland. The christian congregations in Åland subordinated already, according to the oldest deeds of the Middle Ages, from the beginnig of 1300 under the diocese of Åbo. During the Middle Ages, when clerical and secular administrations, as well as jurisdiction, became more stabile, Åland and Finland (Österland) became by degrees geographically more and more united. When the castle of Kastelholm was erected, Åland formed at times a castle fief of its own, usually however subordinating under the governor of Åbo. In 1435, when the Finnish district of jurisdiction was divided, it was decided that Åland was to belong to the so-called „Norfinne” district of jurisdiction. The group of islands belonged to the Duchy, given as a fief to Duke Johan in 1556, and even after 1581 when Finland was made a Grand-Duchy, Åland constituted an integral part of the same.

When according to the constitution it was decreed in 1634 that the country was to be divided into counties, Åland was made a separate district of jurisdiction under the governor of Åbo and Björneborg. Even before that time Åland had been under the jurisdiction of the new Finnish Court of Appeal at Åbo.

Before Finland was united to Russia in 1809 it was an integral part of Sweden, but geographically it formed a unit of its own with a clearly marked frontier against Sweden. From a number of official deeds of the time before 1809 it appears that Åland was considered part of the Finnish territory and every time important frontier-regulations were performed, the authorities confirmed this fact.

3) Åland constitutes a Part of the Present State Territory of Finland.

During the war 1808—1809 Åland was occupied by the Russian troops. In the peace negotiations at Fredrikshamn Åland took an important part. The Swedish negotiators did all in their power to retain Åland for Sweden. These

efforts were not dictated by ethnographical considerations nor by the feeling of more intimate relationship between Åland and Sweden than between Åland and the rest of Finland; they indicate a natural desire, that Sweden should retain as large territories as possible. The Russians however, conscious of the strategic value of the islands, were not to be persuaded. An attempt from the Swedish side to prevent the erecting of fortifications in Åland failed. The peace treaty of Fredrikshamn of the 17th of Sept. 1809 contained among other things the following articles:

Article IV.

Sa Majesté le Roi — — — — —

Article V.

La mer d'Åland — — — — —

During the last century the inhabitants of Åland and those of the mainland have shared politieal changes and cultural developement and at times of hard political oppression done their duty in the struggle for the constitutional rights of the whole country.

In evidence of the politieal connection of Åland with Sweden the Swedes allege, that a representative of the county of Åland sat in the Riksdag in Stockholm 1809—1810, Åland being during that year united with the county of Uppland. After the rising in May 1808, when it was liberated from the Russian occupation, the administration of Åland passed into the hands of the Governor of the county of Uppland and by a decree of the 6th July 1808, a part of the county of Åbo and Björneborg, Åland included, from where the Russian troops retired, was for the time being placed under the jurisdiction of Svea Court of Appeal and the Diocese of Upsala. This resulted in the Clergy of Åland nominating a representative, who in May 1809 entered the clerical estate of the Riksdag in Stockholm, then opened; he

remaind there until the end of the Riksdag; his mandate was thus a result of the chances of war and not of any legal circumstances whatever. On the other hand Åland was represented at the Diet of Borgå by a member of the clergy, whereas the farmers were not in a position to send a representative.

4) *The Developement of the International Legal Relations* with regard to the Åland islands after the peace of Fredrikshamn (the November treaty of 1855, the events during the Crimean War, the Paris treaty of 1856, on which the so-called Aland Servitude was founded, the Baltic Sea treaty of 1908, the breach of the treaty on the side of the Russians through their erecting fortifications on the Åland islands, etc.) need not be discussed here; any more than the still unsolved question, whether the Åland Servitude still holds good or not.

5) *Through the Declaration of the Independance of Finland* in December 1917 the ties with the Russian Empire of more than a hundred years' standing were broken, and Finland entered the ranks of the free nations. The independence of Finland has been recognized by a number of States, among others by Sweden and Russia (in the beginning of January 1918). The declaration of independence included the complete territory of the Grand-Duchy, with the boundaries clearly defined in the peace treaty of Fredrikshamn, thus also comprising the islands of Åland. The Russian government in recognizing the independence of the country, has not made any special conditions as to Åland.

Just at the time when Finland became independent, however, Åland irredentism became manifest through appeals for the uniting of Aland with the old mother country. Though in the Swedish press a number of arguments have been seth forth, pretending to support the claims of Sweden for Åland, responsible men were forced to acknowledge that the islands of Åland were politically a part of the Finnish State territory. In order to effect a detachment of the islands from the State of Finland, for the sake of their being ceded

to Sweden, reasons have been alleged, which will be discussed below.

6) Swedish Claims for Detaching Åland from Finland.

A fact of fundamental importance — unless one goes back all the way to the Crimean War — is, that Swedish claims of Åland were not put forth until late in the autumn 1917, in connection with the agitation in Åland for a reunion of Åland with Sweden. Official circles in Sweden, even then, looked upon the Åland tendencies rather reservedly. A great Stockholm paper wrote in the beginning of December „that Sweden did no longer take any interest in the Åland islands”.

The Swedish political discussions concerning Åland in the earlier stages of the general war were called forth exclusively by the dangers for Sweden of Åland in Russian hands and fortified by Russia: When Russia collapsed and Finland — with Åland — was liberated from Russia, the occasion for such misgivings disappeared.

In their present State the Swedish claims of Åland arose essentially out of the three following important causes:

1. The Åland irredentism, manifesting itself in an appeal to Sweden;
2. The breaking out of the Finnish revolt, the consequences of which threatened to throw Finland back under Russian dominion and thereby make the question of Åland vital for Sweden, in case the islands in some way returned under Russian rule; and
3. The Swedish military expedition sent in February 1918 to Åland, officially pretending to have a humanitarian aim, but whose psychological influence on opinions and sentiments of the people afterwards became considerable and gained an evidently political character.

The Swedish claims are thus based on arguments principally formulated and built up *after* the liberation of Finland from Russia, not on actual circumstances known and acknowledged earlier.

We have now to take into consideration a widely spread popular opinion in Sweden, urging energetic measures to acquire Åland for Sweden. As motives for these aspirations, to judge from accessible pamphlets and articles in the daily press, the Swedes chiefly allege the geographical and strategic situation of Åland, which in their opinion implies a menace against the safety of Sweden, the historical, economic and cultural ties between the islands and Sweden, and last but not least the Swedish population of Åland, supposed to be animated by a strong desire to attain a „reunion with the old mother country”. The Swedish Government has also fallen in with the said policy, proposing that the Finnish Government should institute a plebiscite before the general peace conference.

7) Repudiation of the Swedish Claims.

The Swedish claims for a union of the Åland islands with Sweden, above historically explained, must from the Finnish side be considered unjustifiable both on the principle of the Right of Nations and from a military, political economic, geographic or ethnographic point of view. A critical review of the different Swedish claims accentuates all the arguments set down from the Finnish side in favour of preserving the group of islands for Finland.

a) Points of View in Connection with the Right of Nations.

As pointed out above, Åland is an integral part of the State of Finland and it is an incontestible duty to defend the integrity of the country and oppose any undue attempt to deprive it of any part of its territory.

In Finland the Swedish claims have been looked upon as an attempt to profit from favourable conjunctures, not considering the altered political situation, created through Finland's liberation. At present the counterpart of Sweden is the young independent State of Finland, which has never had and never will harbour any aggressive plans against the old mother country.

The idea, propounded in the Swedish press (*Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, Oct. 1st 1918) that a solving of the Åland question depends on an agreement between Sweden and Russia, must be most decidedly repudiated. Questions touching the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of Finland can of course not be solved without the consent of the Finnish State. Whether Åland is to remain part of Finland or not, is a question that does not concern Russia.

It must however be admitted that from the side of official Sweden stress has been laid on the necessity of an amicable settlement, and the King of Sweden's speech to the deputation from Åland in Febr. 1918 was of the same tenor. The best opportunity of solving the Åland question, with the consent of Finland has however been neglected by Sweden, Sweden having during the red revolt omitted to render help in the hard struggle of Finland for reinstating legal order and shutting out the contagious plague of bolshevism. In its utmost need Finland applied first of all to its old mother country for help, but the help was denied.

Finland need not agree to decide the future of Åland by a plebiscite, so much the less, as a procedure of this kind has never before been applied in any case, comparable to that of the Åland question and there is no evidence at all how far the said measure will be applied at the future international general settlement. In any case, we must assume, that the right of the sovereign Finnish State will be respected by the Powers and that no part of the country will be detached from it against its will. Those times must be over, when the small nations and their life interests were treated as objects of the outrageous policy of the Powers. — It is not sufficient to proclaim the right of self-determination of the small nations; the right of the *States* must also be respected.

An annexation of Åland against the will of Finland would result in tearing asunder the ancient ties of friendship and kinskip with Sweden, thus making an end of solidarity between the northern nations, most desirable from all points of view.

b) Military Points of View.

The military claims alleged from the Swedish side, can now be classed in two categories. Firstly the Swedes make out that the future independence of Finland from Russia is not guaranteed; there is the possibility of the country returning under Russian rule.

Secondly there are the military considerations, significant even in case Finland exists as an independent State.

The points of view of the first category coinciding with the arguments of the Swedes ever since 1809 up to the time of the general war, no further explanation is needed.

In justification of the second group of arguments the following is alleged:

Among the northern countries, notably Sweden and Finland, Sweden through its population and political and military developement, is the dominating one. Åland, the key to the Baltic and the Bothnian Bay, is consequently guarded in the best way by belonging to Sweden. The general position in North Europe therefore demands, that Åland be united to Sweden. To Sweden it is of vital interest and vast importance to guard itself through the possession of Åland against the danger of an attack from Åland, occupied by an enemy, especially as the group of islands is situated so close to the Swedish mainland and to the capital of the realm. The possibilities of Finland warding off a hostile occupation, would not be worth much, and it is to be apprehended that Finland might become dependent on a great power, the country then having to submit to its being used as a basis in attacks against Sweden.

On Finland's side this part of the question may be met in the following way:

The strategic position of the Åland islands is of such great importance, according to the Swedish opinion, as to make the Åland question a vital one. Characteristic are the fruitless negotiations in Fredrikshamn in 1809 and those in connection with the peace conference at Paris 1856, which led

to a convention of the same year, stipulating that military, or maritime establishments on the islands were not to be erected and maintained. When the Russians built fortifications in Åland at the beginning of the general war, in opposition to treaties and conventions, it caused disquietude and protests from Sweden and they claimed a solving of the Åland question in a manner to secure the military interests of Sweden.

Doubtless the Åland islands in the hands of a hostile eastern power constitute a threat against Sweden, just as the said islands in the hands of a hostile western power constitute a direct threat against an independent Finland. The question has however entered into an essentially new phase after the collapse of the Russian empire, when the independent Finnish State was constituted. There is no danger of Finland threatening the Swedish interests and their possibilities of defence, as long as Åland belongs to Finland; further, Finland is willing to offer Sweden any guarantees in military matters, needed to secure their interests.

Since August 1918 negotiations have been carried on between Finnish, Swedish and German delegates concerning the demolition of all the fortifications and military buildings in Åland. During the negotiations the Finnish Government loyally carried out all they engaged themselves to perform in the way of demolishing the Åland fortifications, and were ready to guarantee that the work should be duly carried out. The Swedes, however, preferred claims of greater import than the question of demolition and its technical details implied, which claims indicated their intention of combining this question with that of sending to Åland considerable Swedish forces, which might have created a new international state of things to support the Swedish political plans as regards the future of Åland. Through mutual concessions, especially on the Finnish side, the parties have now fully agreed as to the extent of the duty of demolishing, and the manner and time of performing the work. Through the said

agreement, forming an evidence of the desire of Finland to further any efforts for concord in the North, a way has been paved for regulating the Åland question in a manner to satisfy the interests of both States.

From the Swedish side however there is the objection, that there are no guarantees of the Åland islands in future being ruled by a neutral Finland, with friendly feelings towards Sweden. Finland may — they aver — sooner or later be thrown back under the rule of a new Russian dominion or become depedant on some other power, hostile to Sweden.

The former alternative does not, we think, call for any detailed refutation. The coming peace congress of the world will definitively clear up the future of Finland with regard to the Right of Nations.

There ought not to be the least reason to fear that the independence of Finland at the said congress will not be recognized by all the Powers, and the people of Finland, being determined by all available measures to assert their independence. Sweden should not entertain an unreasonable fear in the matter.

Should Finland, in case of war, in which Sweden happened to be involved, cooperate with any other power than Russia, we must remember that the three countries belong to the same group of powers, and thus together have to undertake the defence of Åland. In such a case there are greater chances for Finland to take the needful steps for the defence of the islands, thanks to the favourable means of communication between the mainland and Åland, via the islands, whereas the means of communication between Åland and Sweden in times of war are not as easily kept up, and are always exposed to the possibility of being broken off. Should on the other hand such an unlikely thing happen as a war between Sweden and Finland, the possibility of Sweden defending Åland would be extremely doubtful, owing to the above said strategic situation, especially as presum-

ably an agreement as to the non- fortifying of the islands will be made in the near future.

c) Commercial Points of View.

One of the reasons for a connection of Åland with Sweden, is the intimate economic relation between the group of islands and the old mother country. It cannot be denied that the population of Åland may in a measure have felt isolated economically from Finland, owing to the difficulty of communication with the mainland and the more favourable market for their goods in Sweden, which however cannot constitute an indisputable reason for breaking the ties of union between Åland and Finland. The excellent situation of Åland and its possibilities of export (wood, fish and agricultural products) no less than the commercial tendencies of the people, will always result in lively commercial intercourse with Sweden, for which the custom-boundary will not constitute any obstacle worth mentioning. Difficulties occasioned by the present rationing and license system do not count, as these restrictions will by and by be set aside at the return of normal conditions. If Åland were separated from Finland, very grave commercial difficulties would be the consequence. A custom-boundary drawn through the Finland—Åland archipelago, consisting of hundreds of large and small islands and rocks, could practically not be guarded with any effectivity: smuggling on a large scale, followed by a general demoralization of the people, would be the inevitable result.

The separatistic movement in Åland is founded to a great extent on the desire for economic advantages. An enormous increase of trade is looked forward to, in case of a union with Sweden. Economic life however is dependent on many circumstances, which cannot be surveyed at a glance, and it is extremely doubtful whether the high-flown hopes of the separatists would ever be realized. The population of Åland also allege that their economic conditions would become less advantageous in the independent Finnish State than hitherto. This assertion does not hold good: things

will probably develope in a contrary direction. The government is expected to take measures towards social reforms and the furthering of the economic life in Åland. Thus the question of new means of communication will be considered and steps will be taken for the developement of agriculture. A powerful impetus would be given by the introduction of independent local autonomy, as extensive as the constitution of the country allows, and by applying the principles of parish local administration.

d) Geographical Points of View.

The archipelago of Åland — one of the greatest and densest in the world — consists of a countless number of large and small islands, partly inhabited, partly uninhabited, lying between the Finnish mainland and the main island, called Åland Proper. The Åland islands are of the same geological structure as the mainland, north of Åbo and Björneborg. The archipelago forms a bridge between the Finnish mainland and Åland Proper, which is the last of the group on the western side. Geologists assume that the county of Åland as well as the islands and rocks round the Finnish coast in primeval times formed one undivided mainland, having through geological changes got its present shattered character. The connection between Åland proper and the mainland is facilitated through the straits between the islands on the inner side being covered with practicable ice. Although Åland Proper lies nearer to Sweden than to the boundary of the Finnish mainland it belongs geographically to Finland. The natural boundary between Sweden and Finland runs along the Åland Sea with a depth of 200 — 300 metres, while the depth on the inner side only amounts to 20 metres on an average. We do not in Finland agree, that from a geographical point of view a Swedish administrative centre would be more natural than a Finnish one for the Åland islands.

e) Ethnographical, Language and Cultural Points of View.

Åland Irredentism.

Further reasons for a detachment of Åland are, according to the Swedes, the mutual language and historical and cultural developement. Race, habits, customs, dialect etc. are closely related to Sweden, they say; Åland as a Swedish county would be something quite natural, while a connection with the predominantly Finnish Finland is an „abnormity as to language and ethnography.”

To meet these assertions we beg to point out the following:

The population of Åland not being able to put forward the plea of an earlier settlement than the rest of the Swedish population on the Finnish mainland, it does not form a tribe or nationality apart, and the existance of Swedish culture in Åland is not opposed to the Swedish Finnish culture in Finland. The population of Åland on the contrary constitutes an integral part of the Finnish-Swedish nationality, comprising about one eighth of the whole population of Finland and who are principally settled on the western and southern coasts, while the southwestern archipelago forms a tie of union. There is no boundary of race or language between the Åland islands and the Swedish archipelago on the southwest coast of Finland, neither is there a geographical boundary against the mainland.

When the question of separating Åland from Finland arose, an energetic protest from all the political parties, especially the Swedish speaking group, was heard; the latter thought a detachment fatal for the existense of the Swedish nationality in Finland. The future of the Finnish-Swedish nationality might be endangered, it was thought, by the loss of one part its territory. The Swedish political party in Finland, not long ago, exhorted the people of Åland to desist from their separatistic action and to take part in the work for the mutual culture and for the reconstruction of the native country.

In pleading their cause the Åland people refer to the principle of the right of „small nations to decide for themselves”, a result of the general war and aiming at giving

oppressed nations a happier lot and building up the states on a firmer and more homogeneous basis. On their part the population of Finland maintain the above principle, but they cannot approve of its being applied in the question under debate. The population of Åland, estimated at about 25,000 souls, cannot be called a nationality by itself, as mentioned above; it is only a part of the Swedish speaking population of Finland, at present estimated at about 400,000 people. The principle of the right of the small nations to decide for themselves would lead to a disturbance of international legal relations and the stability of the states, if every province or every group of people, speaking the same language, were allowed to decide about its own fate. Reasons of more weight and consequence, than the opinion in Sweden and Åland could offer, are needed to make the principle of the right of the small nations to decide for themselves applicable, if the said principle is not to become an empty catchword or be turned into a pretext for all kinds of hostile tendencies against the existence of a State.

The weightiest reason, alleged by the Åland people, is the fear of being denationalized. They fear that the Swedish language and the culture, inherited from their fathers, might be suppressed during a continued union with Finland, through the predominance of the Finnish language in public life and through Finnish speaking immigration.

These fears need not any longer constitute a ground for separatistic tendencies. Influenced by the great events all over the world, the principle of protecting minorities and securing their languages and their right of cultural development have gained ground and it is to be hoped that justice will be done to the said principle at the coming general peace congress. The said principle has already been recognized in Finland, for the proposition for a new constitution contains guarantees to secure the rights of the Swedish-speaking population. Further privileges will be secured to Åland by developing its administration into self-government and by introducing reforms, to be submitted to a careful revisal by

the government. Such a policy as well as the measures taken to further economical life ought to counteract irredentism in Åland and create stronger ties between it and the rest of Finland.

Sweden's desire of annexing Åland is supported by the following arguments: founding their claims on the principle of the right of nations to decide for themselves, the Finlanders make out, that the aspirations of the Finnish population in *East Carelia* to be united with Finland, ought to be realized. In the Carelian question they allege similar points of view as those that the Swedes allege in the Åland question. Finland might, they say, in compensation for the ceding of Åland receive East Carelia.

We must accentuate most strongly that the East Carelian question is a political problem by itself, not to be coupled with the Åland question. The incorporation of East Carelia is necessitated by the facts that it belongs to Finland geographically, that its inhabitants ethnographically, as to language and character, are Finns, that the population has time after time insisted on being detached from the Russian empire, now in a state of dissolution, and incorporated with the independent Finnish state, and that the introduction of culture among the uneducated population can only be performed by Finland. The economical interests of this district, whose traffic partly passes through exclusively Finnish territory, are to a great extent dependent on its being united with Finland. It is by no means the intention of Finland to solve the East Carelian question in a manner to injure Russian interests of importance, on the contrary, we must strive to keep up good relations between Finland and Russia. However, Finland must see that its eastern frontier is secured against future hostile attacks, which is possible only if a regulation of the boundaries can be attained. The principle of the right of nations to decide for themselves aims

at rendering the states ethnographically as homogeneous as possible and consequently the Finns apply it to their Carelian kinsmen, who are economically and culturally dependent on Finland and who form an isolated Finnish speaking group in Russia, while the population of Åland, amounting to about 6 % of the Swedish population of Finland, forms an integral part of the territory inhabited by Swedes.

Åland Irredentism is not a phenomenon of a permanent character, created through circumstances of a normal nature; it is the outcome of exceptional circumstances, directing the opinion of the population towards the idea, that a happy future could be attained only by a union with Sweden.

By the following short statement of late events in Åland we hope clearly to show that the above opinion is correct.

After the outbreak of the general war, a considerable Russian garrison, representing a soldiery of lowest quality, were placed in Åland. The presence of these soldiers, behaving most brutally, and the work at the fortifications, made the people dread, that peace and happiness were gone for ever from the islands as soon as they were fortified and had become strategically important.

Through the revolution in Russia and the development in consequence thereof, the situation in Åland became more and more critical. The soldiery became more and more dissolute and a terror reigned, which manifested itself in murder and plunder.

At the same time the political situation in Finland assumed a most menacing character, in consequence of the outrageous behaviour of the Finnish bolschevists. The conclusion drawn from this state of things by the leading persons of Åland, was, that the position of Åland as a part of Finland was extremely precarious.

To look to Sweden, as the possible liberator from these difficulties, was but natural. Late in the autumn 1917 the first symptoms of irredentism manifested themselves; and a consequent agitation got nourishment enough through the

further developement of the situation, through the red revolt in Finland, through the expeditions of the rebels to Åland and through the fighting that took place in Åland between the government troops, on one side, and the red hordes under Russian soldiery, on the other. It is not to be wondered at that irredentism in Åland grew and strengthened during these troubled times, the more so as the result of the war for the liberty of Finland seemed extremely uncertain to begin with. The leading persons of Åland justified their agitation by saying, that the only means of saving their people from remaining within the boundaries of a bolshevistic Finland as a part of a bolshevistic federative East Europe, was a union between the islands and Sweden.

We must however acknowledge that the separatistic agitation in Åland did not equally succeed in all parts of the islands.

The feeling of solidarity with Finland manifested itself especially in the eastern parts of the archipelago; — thus the irredentistic tendencies gained very little ground in the eastern parishes, especially Kökar.

Here we must also point out the strong psychological influence on the separatistic tendencies, which the Swedish military expedition to Åland during Febr.—May 1918 exercised — an expedition which was interpreted by the leading agitators as a proof that the union with Sweden was to be regarded as a fait accompli. Later events have however shown how untenable the basis was on which the irredentistic agitation was founded. The red revolt in Finland was quelled and the country has assumed its place as an independent State among the nations.

In summing up our views about the irredentism of Åland, we must say that it is founded on circumstances of a temporary character, that there is no longer a real reason for its existence and that solicitude for the future of the Åland population, which will be secured through measures

already proposed and taken, ought under no circumstances to necessitate an international intervention, which, while lacking the authority, justified by the state of affairs, would injure the rights and prerogatives of Finland to decide about its own territory.

Helsingfors, Dec. 1, 1918.

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